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The PRINTER of the FREEMAN'S JOURNAL, to the PUBLIC.

AT no period of time, in no æra of important events, from the first eſtabliſhment of ſocial government, have the liberties of man, have the rights even of human nature, been more deeply intereſted, than at the time in which we preſume to addreſs you. While Liberty, *the nobleſt ornament of ſociety, and without which no community can be* well *organized or ſocial, ſeemed to pine and ſicken, under the trammels of deſpotic reſtraint, in every of the ancient nations of the earth; it fairly promiſes to reſume its priſtine majeſty here; and the New World begins to emerge from the fangs and tyranny of the Old.*

One of the firſt ſources of her decline in thoſe countries where ſhe laſt reſided, ſprung from the wanton and unhallowed reſtraints which the jealous arm of deſpotiſm hath impoſed on the freedom of the preſs. This is not a place for tracing facts; every novice in hiſtory muſt know them. The freedom, then, of theſe ſtates, now exalted into empire, muſt riſe or fall with the freedom of the preſs. Of this the framers of our government have been ſenſible, when in the thirty-fifth ſection, the Conſtitution of this ſtate, expreſly declares, that "Printing-preſſes ſhall be free to every perſon who undertakes to examine the "proceedings of the legiſlature, or any part of government."

Great is the importance, in infant governments, raiſed on the baſis of freedom, and where every freeman is himſelf a ruler, that the moſt unreſtrained and impartial channel of intelligence be open to the citizens at large; that they be made acquainted with the real *ſtate of their affairs, and that the characters of their public ſervants, both* individually *and* collectively, *be made manifeſt. With this patriot view, and under the tutelage of* Law *and the* Conſtitution, *has the Subſcriber now opened a* Free Preſs, *unreſervedly free, to every citizen indiſcriminately, whoſe principles coincide with thoſe of the Revolution, and whoſe object is confeſſedly known to point at* public *or* private *good. The* Freeman's Journal *is an emphatic and well known name; it ſuits the times; and is therefore adopted to diſtinguiſh and entitle our Paper. We fixedly deſign that it ſhall correſpond with its title; and to it every freeman, ſo his publication be decent, and not repugnant to freedom, ſhall have acceſs. It will be open to* Queries, Hints, Cards, Satires, Eſſays, Strictures, Diſſertations, Poems, Advertiſements extraordinary, *&c. To encourage genius, to deter vice, and diſrobe tyranny and miſrule of every plumage, the Subſcriber hereby pledges himſelf to the public, that nothing ſhort of torture, or the formality of law, ſhall ever extort from him the name or names of thoſe, whoſe publications may find room in the Freeman's Journal.*

Francis Bailey.

**** This Paper will be publiſhed early on *Wedneſday* morning, weekly.

On the FREEDOM *of the* PRESS.

(*Said to be written by Dr.* FRANKLIN.)

WHILE free from force the Preſs remains,
Virtue and freedom chear our plains,
And learning largeſſes beſtows,
And keeps *unlicens'd open houſe*.
We to the nation's public mart,
Our works of wit, and ſchemes of art,
And philoſophic goods, this way,
Like water-carriage, cheap convey.
This *tree* which knowledge ſo affords,
Inquiſitors with flaming ſwords
From *lay-approach* with zeal defend,
Leſt *their own* paradiſe ſhould end.
The Preſs from her fœcundous womb,
Brought forth the arts of Greece and Rome;
Her off'ſpring, ſkill'd in logic war,
Truth's banner wav'd in open air;
And lawleſs pow'r, the long kept field,
By reaſon quell'd, was forc'd to yield.
This *Nurſe of arts*, and *Freedom's fence*,
To chain, is treaſon againſt ſenſe;
And liberty, thy thouſand tongues
None ſilence who deſign no wrongs;
For thoſe that uſe the gag's reſtraint,
Firſt rob, before they ſtop complaint.

An ESSAY *on the* Extent *and* Value *of our* Weſtern unlocated Lands, *and the proper Method of diſpoſing of them, ſo as to gain the greateſt poſſible advantage from them.*

By a CITIZEN *of* PHILADELPHIA.

IN my ſeveral treatiſes on finance, I have all along endeavoured to open and explain the great general principles of the ſubject, viz. Improvement of the revenue, and economy in the expenditures. In this eſſay I mean to confine myſelf to one particular ſource or object of public wealth, out of which great revenue may be obtained, by proper and timely wiſdom and care, I mean *our vacant unſettled lands*. I will endeavour to arrange, as clearly as I can, what I have to ſay on this ſubject, under the following heads, viz.

I. *The whole territory or extent of the thirteen ſtates is the aggregate of them all*, i. e. The territory or extent of each of the ſtates added together, make the whole territory or extent of right and dominion of the united ſtates, and of courſe whatever is comprehended within the boundaries of each ſtate, now makes a part of our commonwealth. This is to be conſidered as our preſent poſſeſſion, our preſent decided right, which is guarantied to us by the treaty with France (Article XI) together with any "additions or conqueſts, which our confederation may obtain during the war, from any of the dominions now or heretofore poſſeſſed by Great-Britain in North-America;" ſo that by conqueſt we may extend our dominion further, if we can, and in this caſe we ſhall have the guarantee of the treaty aforeſaid for our ſecurity, but if this can't be done, our preſent poſſeſſions are abſolutely and unconditionally guarantied to us, with liberty, ſovereignty, and independence, abſolute and unlimited, in and over the ſame; and as the great intereſts of France and our commonwealth will always make the perpetual union of them neceſſary, ſo theſe powers united, will be able to afford ſuch a ſure mutual protection to the whole dominions of each other, as will render them wholly ſecure and free of danger from any other powers whatever; ſo that we may ſafely compute on all the advantages of our preſent poſſeſſions, and turn our thoughts on the ways and means of making the beſt of them, while at the ſame time we have a rich and valuable chance of acquiring by conqueſts new dominions and having of courſe ſuch new acquiſitions covered by the ſame guarantee which now ſecures our preſent poſſeſſions. No body can pretend to deny; that our preſent poſſeſſions comprehend all the lands included within the boundaries of the thirteen ſtates, as the ſame exiſted at the time our independence firſt began, but it will be ſtrongly urged that they cannot extend beyond them, ſo as to cover any lands not included within the bounds of ſome one of the ſtates, unleſs we can make a claim to a further extent by conqueſt; indeed I do not ſee how we can otherwiſe ſupport a claim to independence, ſovereignty, and dominion over any thing which was not within our bounds at that time: Therefore it follows, 1. That wherever we fix the exterior limit or bounds of any one of the ſtates, there we fix the bounds of our commonwealth, and it will be urged againſt us, that all beyond is not our territory, our right or dominion; and therefore, 2. It is our intereſt to extend the exterior boundary of each of our ſtates as far as we fairly can, and of courſe any attempt (ariſing from envy or any little diſputes) to abridge or reduce the limits of any of the ſtates to lines ſhort of their true extent, and prevent their covering the whole territory to which their original charters, or uſual preſcriptive titles gives them right, is the height of folly, and abſurd policy, and operates directly againſt the great intereſts of the commonwealth: and here I can't but take notice of the madneſs, ſhort-ſighted policy, and *public miſchief* of a late pamphlet, intitled *Public Good*, which by very weak and trifling arguments, attempts to limit the territory of Virginia, to a very inconſiderable part of its original and true extent. I think ſome note of diſapprobation ſhould be fixed on that treatiſe, leſt it ſhould be produced in ſome future debates, as a proof of the general ſenſe of the ſtates at this time. There is indeed, as is well known, ſome obſcurity of deſcription to be found in all the ancient charters of theſe ſtates, which by that means admit of a latitude of conſtruction; but moſt of theſe are reduced to a determinate certainty, by ſubſequent acts, deciſions, uſages, &c.—and, I conceive, that for moſt obvious reaſons.

II. *The boundaries of the ſeveral ſtates are to be taken and aſcertained from their original charters, with ſuch conſtruction as has obtained by ſubſequent uſage, judicial deciſions, or any other acts of the crown, or the inhabitants, which tend to give them a determinate and fixed definition.* If in any caſe no light can be drawn from ſuch uſage or ſubſequent acts, the particular boundaries muſt depend on the words of the charters, with ſuch reaſonable conſtruction as ſhall give them their greateſt effect, and be moſt adequate to the original intention of them, or in law language, ſo *ut res magis valeat quam pereat*; by which rule of conſtruction, there can be no doubt but Virginia, having boundaries ſufficiently fixed on the ſea coaſt, is to extend weſt, and carry her breadth to the ſouth-ſea, or at leaſt as far as the dominion of the crown extended, at the time when American independence firſt began. Two things are ſufficiently clear,